

**Security Council**

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**Letter dated 7 May 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council**

I have the honour to transmit herewith a paper on the working methods of the Security Council for the month of May 2020, during the presidency of Estonia (see annex). The paper has been agreed upon by the members of the Council in the light of the continued challenges posed by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic to the Council's usual procedures.

*(Signed)* **Sven Jürgenson**  
President of the Security Council



## Annex

### **Working methods of the Security Council during the presidency of Estonia, May 2020**

1. On 1 May 2020, Estonia assumed the presidency of a Security Council that continues its work despite extraordinary circumstances.
2. The restrictions currently imposed by the Governor of New York State in relation to coronavirus disease (COVID-19) will be in place in New York until at least 15 May, and the Secretary-General has issued measures aimed at limiting the presence of United Nations staff within the United Nations premises until 31 May 2020. The limitations on holding large in-person meetings owing to the COVID-19 pandemic are expected to be continued until the end of June 2020.
3. After consultations with the Secretariat and all Council members, Estonia plans to utilize the following guidelines, aimed at continuing the work of the Council to the greatest extent possible, during the month of May.
4. The present guidelines build upon and enhance the guidelines provided in the letter dated 27 March 2020 from the President of the Council addressed to the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Council ([S/2020/253](#)) and the letter dated 2 April 2020 from the President of the Council addressed to the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council ([S/2020/273](#)).
5. The Council members have assessed the measures outlined in the letter dated 27 March 2020 ([S/2020/253](#)), and have agreed that the procedure for the adoption of resolutions outlined in that letter will remain in place for the duration of the restrictions on movement in New York owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, so as to enable the Council to discharge its mandate. The implementation of the procedure will be assessed at the end of May and may be reviewed, adjusted or discontinued, subject to agreement among all members.
6. The present guidelines are a response to the current exceptional and unprecedented circumstances and will be revised, should circumstances change during the course of the presidency of Estonia in May, in close consultation with all Council members and in the light of updates to and developments in the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### **Informal programme of work of the Council**

7. In the spirit of transparency, the presidency intends to issue an informal programme of work after consultations with Council members during the first working day of its presidency. The programme will include all the activities of the Council, to be conducted mostly through video teleconference meetings or through a written procedure for adoptions.
8. The informal programme of work will be circulated by the Permanent Mission of Estonia to the United Nations to the wider membership of the Organization and published on the Council's website, as well as on the website of the Permanent Mission of Estonia.

#### **Discussions**

9. The virtual discussions held during the presidency of Estonia will be designated as "open video teleconference meeting on [item on the agenda to be discussed]" and "closed video teleconference meeting on [item on the agenda to be discussed]".

10. With the assistance of the Security Council Affairs Division, the presidency plans to work in the spirit of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, ensuring that all Council members participating in a virtual discussion are represented by appropriately credentialed delegates, pursuant to rule 13; that the agenda is adopted at the outset of the video teleconference meeting, pursuant to rule 9; and that any other rules are observed, as appropriate, under chapter VI, entitled "Conduct of business".

11. The President of the Council may invite Member States, members of the Secretariat or individuals who are not members of the Council to participate in an open video teleconference, pursuant to rules 37 and 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

12. Until technical constraints are resolved, the video teleconference meetings will be conducted in English.

#### **Announcement of video teleconference meetings**

13. The day before an event, the presidency of the Council will share with the wider membership of the United Nations and the media, through email, a message from the President of the Council announcing the video teleconference meeting. The presidency will inform the public of the day's programme through social media on the day of the event, prior to the meeting(s).

14. Information on the daily agenda of the Council will also be available to the wider membership and the general public in the programme of work on the Council's website.

#### **Records of video teleconference meetings**

15. Until the situation changes, verbatim records of the events will not be published. Records and other information relating to the video teleconference meetings are published on the Council's website in the section entitled "VTCs of the Security Council members and outcomes during the COVID-19 pandemic (March-May 2020)".

16. The presidency will encourage briefers, where appropriate and according to their practice, to share their presentations with the presidency of the Council. Special representatives of the Secretary-General, special envoys of the Secretary-General and department heads may wish to publish their statements to the Council on the web page of their mission or department on the United Nations website.

17. The President of the Council will circulate as a document of the Council a compilation document within 48 hours of the end of the meeting containing the interventions of the briefers and those of the members and non-members of the Council participating in the video teleconference meeting who ask for the inclusion of their statement in the document. To that end, members and non-members of the Council are invited to send their statements to the presidency as soon as possible, and no later than the day of the meeting. Circulation of a compilation document will not apply to the closed video teleconferences of Council members.

#### **Live feed through United Nations webcast; participation of non-members**

18. Open video teleconference meetings will be streamed by United Nations webcast in full. Closed video teleconference meetings will not be webcast.

19. United Nations Member States that are not members of the Council will be invited by the presidency to submit written statements to be included as part of the compilation document for the following select open video teleconference meetings of

the Council on: working methods (15 May) and protection of civilians in armed conflict (27 May). Non-members of the Council may be asked to deliver statements orally during the above-mentioned meetings if it becomes technically feasible.

#### **Recordings of open video teleconference meetings**

20. In coordination with the Secretariat, the President requests that the webcasts of the statements delivered during the open video teleconference meetings of the Council continue to be made publicly available and archived as United Nations webcasts.

#### **Outcomes of video teleconference briefings followed by video teleconference consultations**

21. To the extent possible, and in agreement with Council members, the presidency will facilitate the negotiation of elements for the press for every Council discussion. The President will orally deliver any agreed elements for the press through United Nations webcast.

#### **Adoption of resolutions**

22. The presidency will apply the agreement reached by Council members under the leadership of China as President of the Council for the month of March 2020 and outlined in the letter dated 27 March 2020 from the President of the Council addressed to the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Council with regard to the written procedure for the adoption of resolutions, if necessary.

#### **Presidential statements**

23. In the absence of objections, the adoption of presidential statements that have been electronically agreed upon by consensus following a non-objection procedure of no less than 24 hours will be announced by the President during an open video teleconference meeting. The statements will have the same status as those adopted in the Security Council Chamber. They will also be published as an official document of the Council.

#### **Conduct of video teleconference meetings by the members of the Council**

24. In order to make the discussions as efficient as possible, the presidency requests all participants to see to it that both principal and alternate delegates are logged in at the same time, thereby ensuring that, if a principal's connection is dropped, an alternate can take his or her place immediately. The procedure will minimize the need to suspend the event if participants lose their connection.

25. It is highly recommended that all principals, alternates and briefers test their microphones and video equipment 30 minutes before the beginning of a video teleconference, including by connecting through the links provided, and follow the technical guidance provided by United Nations technicians.

26. Following general practice, the order of speakers for the video teleconference meetings of Council members will be established by a draw.

#### **Subsidiary organs of the Council**

27. The presidency expresses its support for the continuation of the work of the subsidiary organs of the Council, to the greatest possible extent.